

America's World War II Home Front Heritage

by Roger E. Kelly

Evidence of our World War II home front can be found beneath farm fields, on grazing parcels or public lands, within former and active military installations, or in rural forests. Structures, buildings, and objects connect the global war of 1941-1945 to participants and their descendants. In 1991, the nation commemorated the 50th anniversary of the United States' entry into World War II. The nation is now approaching the 60th anniversary of the Allies and the United States Victory over Japan and Victory in Europe, celebrating the war's end. This article aims to enhance our understanding of our nation's history and the physical heritage of our wartime-era home front. (Figure 1)

Much has been written and spoken about how the United States participated in, and was changed by, the world conflict.¹ The nation's home front was like a goldsmith's crucible, recasting relationships between the country's majority and minority peoples into new images and unexpected forms. The nation used demographic diversity for dual, conflicting purposes—for wartime unity at home or “at the front,” and for racial and ethnic separation of society, sometimes behind barbed wire. The places described here were crucibles where citizens began to form new images of American diversity.

Physical evidence of home front mobilization, the confinement of certain groups, military defense, or war matériel production speak volumes about wartime political and cultural behavior. Even though these material remains are only several decades old, they are finite heritage resources with relevance across today's living generations just as Civil War battlefields resonated across earlier (and present) American generations. But unlike widely held personal memories of hardships, victory gardens, ration coupon books, and the loss of family members, tangible evidence is unevenly scattered across the United States. Coastal states with fortified cities and shipyards, forested mountain regions, and rural agricultural lands witnessed different home front landscape uses than midcontinent manufacturing centers and Sun Belt states.

If recognized and preserved, tangible World War II home front heritage can contribute to social and political histories, develop deeper feelings of patriotism and reflective nostalgia, encourage cross-generational communication, and inspire grassroots heritage tourism for today's citizens. Varieties of home front heritage—landscapes, objects, structures, memories, stories, and secrets—are diminishing as are the number of the people directly associated with this past.

Specific examples discussed here were chosen utilizing five criteria: 1) historic involvement of large groups; 2) pertinent, accessible, and reliable information; 3) extant associated archeological, architectural, historical, and other materials; 4) active local preservation or museum presentations focused on home front themes; and 5) interest groups of original participants, their descendents, and friends. Information sources are published works, news articles, websites, personal observation, and persons identified in acknowledgements. Other wartime historic venues and properties such as the Trinity Site, sunken warships at Pearl Harbor, laboratories at Oak Ridge or Berkeley, and historic ships are very important, but are not included here. Heroic military units have significant stories that are commemorated elsewhere.

We can learn from other nations with similar home front histories.

Researchers in the United Kingdom, for example, have inventoried extant World War II-era facilities in the English countryside and produced studies showing impacts of prisoner-of-war labor on agricultural production. As part of its mission, Britain's English Heritage organization promotes national stewardship of military heritage through site sustainability, "beneficial reuse," documentation before land development, and encouragement of community support. Near Malton in North Yorkshire, a preserved prisoner-of-war camp containing 30 barracks, each with displays of European and Great Britain wartime topics, was developed as a World War II historical park.²

Identifying World War II Home Front Places

Some American home front locations are identified by visible foundations or vacant structures, towering smoke stacks, abandoned roadways, still-occupied buildings, relocated barracks, fortifications, abandoned shipyard facilities, or supply depot elements such as munitions bunkers.³ Many extant World War II structures, buildings, and features have been identified during cultural resource inventories for active military installations, some federal and state parks, and local jurisdictions. But many locations contain little or no evidence of significant wartime activities due to substantial changes in land use.

Archeology, history, and historic architecture are effective partners for detailed documentation and preservation of civilian and military architecture, particularly remnants of now-gone structures. Archeological investigative techniques, such as research designs, test excavations, mapping, and artifact studies are applicable when above-grade fabric is missing. Archeological methods can also be useful for tracing buried infrastructure systems, recording historic graffiti and abandoned objects, and comparing as-built conditions and original designs.

Industrial archeology is a cross-disciplinary professional field, blending architecture, historical technology, and archeology that can be useful in document-

ing World War II-era sites. The Army Engineer Museum at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, includes exhibits and archives of wartime temporary buildings used nationwide from 1939 to 1945. Examples of home front historic architecture assessment reports include the Old Hospital Complex, the Waste Water Treatment Plant and Incinerator Complex at Fort Carson, Colorado; the Presidio of San Francisco, California; and the Old Parade Ground and MacArthur Avenue at Fort Mason in San Francisco, California.⁴

Major Types of World War II Home Front Properties

Four broad categories of historic places provide a framework to discuss tangible evidence of the nation's 1941-1945 home front. The first category, "controlled group camps," includes centers and camps for interned Japanese Americans; facilities for military prisoners; "Civilian Public Service" quarters for conscientious objectors; "enemy alien" facilities for Axis diplomats and other civilians believed to be a threat to the nation; and facilities for the Aleut Alaska Natives removed from their island villages. The second category includes military-related facilities, permanent or temporary, for defense, training, logistical operations, armament storage and transport, and battlefields. The third category encompasses industrial facilities such as contract and government shipyards, airplane assembly plants, and munitions deployment centers. The final category includes civilian facilities such as defense-worker housing. Examples from each category will be used to illustrate the opportunity for enhanced heritage awareness. The categories are not equal in terms of coherent, accessible information. The first and second categories have much larger bodies of usable literature and extant examples, thus producing a regrettable imbalance in this essay.

Some home front places are designated as National Historic Landmarks, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or appear in state registers. Often designations are based primarily on historical research. Archeological significance may not be identified. Perhaps assumptions are made that little tangible evidence of wartime activity remains embedded on or in a specific property. For some places, remodeling and land reuse have impacted a wartime landscape, but some buried or obscured features may be extant as significant and valuable reminders.

Because a recent overview of the wartime evidence in Hawaii and the Pacific is available, this essay is focused only on America's continental and Alaskan home front.⁵ Public interest in wartime history and places has increased for many reasons, including Tom Brokaw's "greatest generation" best sellers, European battlefield tourism, and recent Hollywood films. Another encouraging example of interest is reflected in TRACES, a nonprofit grassroots consortium of amateur and professional historians, educators, and individuals who participated in home front life and hold an annual conference at Coe College

in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. At least three guidebooks to historic home front military and civilian facilities are available. In 2000, the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans joined the growing number of museums illustrating World War II's significance to the nation.⁶

Controlled Group Camps

The early 1940s witnessed the unprecedented detention of an estimated 650,000 persons. "Impounded people," as described by anthropologist Edward Spicer, included Japanese Americans; Axis war prisoners; citizens of Italy, Germany, and Japan; Americans with "suspicious" surnames; Japanese living in Latin America; registered conscientious objectors; and Aleut Alaska Native people. Extensive literature exists on the experiences of these groups, the legal and moral issues of detention, and the operation of detention facilities.⁷ Video documentaries of camps for Japanese Americans and Axis prisoners of war, and the restrictions placed upon Italian Americans are also available.⁸

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Several federal agencies established facilities to hold detained groups in town-like camps, with basic housing, health services, subsistence supplies, recreation, and internal governance. Physical control of camp inhabitants ranged from maximum security at some prisoner-of-war camps to minimum confinement of civilian aliens. New camps were quickly built from military plans with basic one-story frame barracks, latrines, laundries, communal showers, warehouses, mess halls and kitchens, staff housing, and medical facilities, arranged in grid layouts with open firebreaks and bounded by wire fences and guard towers. In some locations, vacant Depression-era facilities or state prison facilities were re-used. Published recollections and oral histories of detainees within each type of camp give many details about daily life. These sources reveal how ethnic cultural expressions, such as decorative gardens and outdoor art, team sports, fitness clubs, religious practices, political opinions, written language expressed in camp newspapers or graffiti, diet, performing arts, and handicrafts, were adapted to confinement.

The persistence of ethnic culture by detained people can be documented in archeological, historic architecture, and landscape features. Equally important are perspectives about the interaction of surrounding communities with camp residents and among multinational camp populations.

Japanese-American Internment Camps

An inventory of the physical remains of Japanese-American camps and other detention facilities notes that in many locations, substantial structures such as smokestacks, root cellars, infrastructure features, cemeteries, roadways, and support buildings exist today.⁹(Figure 1) In addition, Japanese-style gardens and memorials, hidden graffiti in English and Japanese, and modern commemorative markers are present in many locations.

FIGURE 1: JAPANESE AMERICAN IMPRISONMENT DURING WORLD WAR II



This map shows locations of internment camps and other facilities in the western United States associated with the relocation of Japanese Americans during World War II. (Courtesy of the National Park Service)

Perhaps the best-documented Japanese-American internment camp is Manzanar, the first to open in early 1942 and now part of the National Park System. Extensive archeological, historical, oral history, cultural landscape, and historic architecture studies have been completed, including an inventory of extant prehistory and prewar homestead evidence, and the documentation of the camp's physical features.¹⁰ These studies supported planning the 540-acre national park. Planning participants included Japanese-American landscape architects, the Manzanar Pilgrimage group, a local museum, and neighbors. (Figure 2) As a result, the Manzanar High School auditorium has been restored as an interpretive center and a mess hall building was recently relocated to its original position. The Manzanar National Historic Site Interpretive Center opened April 24, 2004, in conjunction with the 35th annual Manzanar Pilgrimage.

FIGURE 2

During a ceremony at the camp cemetery, participants of the 2003 Manzanar Pilgrimage gathered at the I Rei To or "soul consoling tower." (Courtesy of the National Park Service)



The other nine major camps also contain significant physical evidence worthy of preservation and are identified by historical markers. Several camps are visited annually by reunion groups of former detainees, their families, and friends who work to preserve physical remains and memories of internment experiences.

Department of Justice Internment Camps

The Department of Justice was responsible for three types of facilities: temporary detention camps run by the Immigration and Naturalization Service; comfortable diplomatic "hotel camps;" and "enemy alien" camps for noncitizen Italians, German Americans, Japanese removed from Latin American countries, and others. These facilities were populated with families and individuals who were regarded as a "potential danger to the Nation."¹ Approximately 1,600 Italian citizens and travelers were interned and thousands of Italian Americans were forced to move or comply with travel restrictions. Although exact figures differ, at least 6,300 German Americans and about 300 Italians deported from Latin America were detained, although many were later paroled and released. Approximately 2,200 Latin-American Japanese were classified as "enemy aliens" and held at special home front camps separate from Japanese Americans.

As an example, the Crystal City Internment Camp for "enemy aliens," one of three established in Texas, was a 500-acre complex of 41 cottages, 188 one-room structures, and service buildings such as warehouses, offices, schools, grocery stores, a hospital, and a swimming pool. In 1945, its 3,325 detainees who spoke Japanese, German, Spanish, Italian, and English lived in housing separated by nationality. They worked in camp shops and offices; raised vegetables, pigs, and chickens; made ethnic foods for sale; and assisted in school

FIGURE 3

A German prisoner-of-war in work clothes at the Nyssa prisoner-of-war camp in Oregon was photographed in May 1946. (Courtesy of the Oregon State Archives)



and camp administration. Although the Crystal City camp “resembled a bustling small town,” 10-foot high fences, guard towers, floodlights, and guard patrols constantly reminded detainees of their lack of freedom. The Crystal City camp was the last “enemy alien” facility to close.

Over the past two decades, German-American families have held reunions at the camp. In November 2002, Crystal City and the Zavala County Historical Commission hosted the “First Multi-Ethnic National Reunion of World War II Internment Camp Families.” Approximately 150 German and Peruvian-Japanese families were represented. Today, part of the camp is open terrain and structural foundations are present near a 1985 plaque.¹² Other important “enemy alien” camps were located at Fort Missoula, Montana; Kooskia, Idaho; Seagoville, Texas; and Fort Stanton, New Mexico.¹³

Department of the Army Prisoner-of-War Camps

German military personnel taken prisoner in North Africa during 1943 were the first enemy troops brought to American wartime prisoner-of-war or “PW” camps. (Figure 3) By June 1945, more than 425,000 Axis prisoners—371,000 Germans, 50,000 Italians, and 4,000 Japanese—were housed in about 125 main camps and 425 smaller branch camps across the country.¹⁴ Usually located in rural, isolated regions of the country, PW camps became curiosities to nearby towns, desirable economic boosts to counties, and reminders of the overseas war to neighbors.

Since 1996, Professor Michael R. Waters of Texas A&M University has been investigating Camp Hearne in Texas. Archeological test excavations, extensive archival research in American and German military records, oral histories with former guards and prisoners, and local historical research produced the first comprehensive understanding of a home front prisoner-of-war camp. Foundations for the mess hall, theater, barracks, decorative ponds, and fountains have been documented, and everyday artifacts recovered. The report, *Lone Star Stalag*, offers accounts of prisoners' daily lives and operations, including Nazi followers' violent intimidation of fellow prisoners, relationships between guards and townspeople, and artifacts recovered from the site.¹⁵ Nominations to the National Register of Historic Places and to the Texas State register are in preparation.

Only one other PW camp has undergone an archeological study. Test excavations at Camp Carson in Colorado did not yield significant evidence, but PW camps in Missouri, Iowa, Oklahoma, and New Mexico have been researched by historians. These studies include descriptions of PW involvement with local agricultural production and construction projects as well as soccer games, the barter of handicraft items, and some postwar marriages with American women. Research also provides contrasts in how German and Italian officers and enlisted men adapted to confinement as they attempted to follow their national cultural and political expressions, including Nazi, Fascist, and religious art; soccer teams; food; camp newspapers; crafts; sculpture; and musical performances.¹⁶

Civilian Public Service Camps

Executive Order 8675 issued February 6, 1941, established the Civilian Public Service (CPS) as an alternative obligation for conscription-age men.¹⁷ Approximately 12,000 male conscientious objectors and 300 women entered civilian public service. Nearly all were active members of Mennonite congregations, Church of the Brethren, and the Society of Friends (Quakers), churches which became administrators of CPS facilities in about 30 states. Enrollees performed many important tasks from firefighting to assisting in social service programs, but they experienced restrictive daily routines. No inventory of remaining CPS facilities has been undertaken, but some former Depression-era structures used as CPS camps may exist on U.S. Forest Service or national park lands. Former CPS enrollees have an alumni organization and some have revisited their wartime camp locations.

Unangan Native Peoples' Camps

Aleutian Island warfare in 1942-43 forced removal of about 800 Unangan or Aleut Alaska Native people from their islands as "a military necessity" to protect them from Japanese bombing. Abandoned canneries, 1930s Civilian

Conservation Corps camps, and a former gold mine became substandard “duration villages” in southeastern Alaska for the displaced people, and were operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Unangan could not bring many possessions from their home villages, but still persisted as a cultural group in spite of great hardship. They were included in the 1988 Japanese-American restitution legislation.¹⁸

Military Facilities

Seattle, San Diego, the San Francisco Bay area, New York City’s port complex, Gulf Coast cities, New England harbors, and Alaskan towns housed World War II-related armaments, defensive fortifications, and support bases.¹⁹ World War II defensive installations are in varying stages of preservation or deterioration. Within Cabrillo National Monument near San Diego, a well-preserved four-155mm-gun coastal defense battery constructed in 1941 has been documented with archeological methods and oral history.²⁰ (Figure 4)

At the mouth of the Delaware River in Delaware, Fort Miles Army Base was constructed during 1941 to defend refineries and industrial complexes. A Coast Artillery division manned searchlights, operated several 155mm 1918-model mobile guns, and deployed mine systems. Several tall circular concrete towers used for triangulation of ship positions for battery fire control exist today. Many of the structures are within Delaware’s Henlopen State Park where public information about the former Fort Miles is available.²¹ In Portsmouth, New Hampshire, home front defensive structures are extant within local and state parks. A former Navy communications facility is located within Acadia National Park in Maine and an early coastal radar station is preserved in Redwood National Park in California.

Military training facilities include the huge “Desert Training Center” in California and Arizona. Evidence of General George S. Patton’s desert command post, division-size camps, and support facilities exists on Bureau of Land Management lands.²² A museum near Indio, California, relates Patton’s career and the significance of the center to military preparedness. The Army Air Corps quickly developed hundreds of home front airfields, gunnery ranges, auxiliary bases, and training facilities, which included thousands of women pilots, flight instructors, and support personnel. Many locations retain airfield layouts and building complexes.²³

The compelling story of the Tuskegee Airmen has shown how courageous African-American pilots and their male and female support personnel fought national prejudice as well as Axis enemies.²⁴ Moten Field near Tuskegee, Alabama, includes an extant hangar, control tower, parachute loft, and roadways from the original complex of 15 structures. The Airmen’s veterans group and preservation of the Moten Field facilities as part of a national park has

FIGURE 4

This view of the Coastal Defense Battery Point Loma, CA, in 1941 shows the stabilized Gun Mount #4. (Courtesy of Cabrillo National Monument, National Park Service)



expanded public awareness of African-American contributions to the wartime aviation effort in spite of segregated armed forces.

A major attack by Japanese Imperial forces on the Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base and Fort Means, Alaska, in June 1942 brought deadly combat to United States soil. Brutal fighting on Kiska, Amchitka, Unalaska, and Attu Islands resulted in heavy losses on both sides due to the weather, poorly equipped American forces, bombing, and tenacious resistance. A visitor center for the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area on Unalaska Island will open in 2004 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Aleutian Campaign which brought war and the Unangan peoples' displacement directly to the American home front in Alaska.²⁵

Industrial Facilities

Retooling America's industrial strengths from peacetime consumerism to wartime production required the intense coordination of national economic, political, and technical energies. The War Resources Administration (WRA) and myriad other bureaus implemented this transformation. Places cited below are examples of historic architecture, potential industrial archeology, and the breadth of American industry during wartime. Thousands of ships were constructed at nearly 150 Federal Government and contract shipyards, including the famous Liberty and Victory classes for troop and munitions transport.

Peacetime land use has removed many private-sector shipyards, but dry-docks at Kaiser Company Shipyard #3 in Richmond, California—located within the boundaries of Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park—retain historical integrity.(Figure 5) Aircraft manufacturers and suppliers operated in at least 15 states. Due to labor shortages, Douglas, North American

FIGURE 5

During the years from 1942 to 1944, Dorothea Lange captured many images of Kaiser's Richmond, CA, Shipyard, including this photograph of women workers in a paycheck line. (Courtesy of the Oakland Museum of California)



Aviation, Boeing, Grumman, Bell, Hughes, and Lockheed employed many minority men and women at plants in southern California towns as well as in Seattle and other industrial cities. Some Lockheed and Boeing plants were camouflaged to resemble housing and grain fields. A few historic structures remain at some locations.

The top-secret Manhattan Project and its Hanford Engineer Works B Reactor, near Richland, Washington, has required Superfund environmental restoration work. A National Register nomination covering Hanford's prehistory, historic, and World War II properties was prepared. Building inventories, archeological testing, and archives of historic photographs and documents were also completed.²⁶

At the former Concord Naval Weapons Center near Concord, California, a munitions shipping installation with numerous bunkers, rail sidings, a chapel, and administrative buildings are collectively known as Port Chicago. Here, the "Port Chicago Explosion" on July 17, 1944, killed 320 men, 202 of whom were African American. The refusal by 50 men to continue to work in hazardous conditions led to courts-martials and prison sentences, but by 1946, most sailors were released and discharged. In 1994, Congress established the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial where an annual survivors' commemoration ceremony is held near the piers where two ammunition ships exploded.²⁷

Civilian Facilities

The relocation of 15 million workers and their families to assembly plants, military bases, and shipyards had significant impact on the experiences of civilians

during the war. The Federal Works Agency, Federal Public Housing Authority, major contractors, and city housing commissions developed these facilities. Wartime migration brought major changes to family life and the workplace at major defense industry centers. While racial prejudice continued in government and private housing markets, the scarcity of trainable workers caused defense industry firms to change their recruitment practices to accept women and minority applicants. At the workplace, significant numbers of women and minority workers performed tasks with nonminority males to meet or exceed production goals. Atchison Village, an example of defense worker government housing for 450 shipyard families in Richmond, California, is now included in Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park.

To house military personnel, Atomic Energy Commission staff, and Dupont employees, Richland in Washington State was constructed as a complete “federal town” for about 11,000 people. Nearly 20 housing types—each identified by a letter of the alphabet—were built and assigned based on family size and job status. Some current residents of Richland occupy upgraded Alphabet Houses and are employed in the Hanford Project’s Superfund clean-up programs. The Columbia River Exhibition of History and Technology Museum in Richland offers exhibits on the Hanford Project and a new World War II “1940s Trailer Living” exhibit.²⁸

Two Japanese American pre-war urban communities have continued as ethnic districts. Japantown in San Jose, California, is one of the most intact representatives of Japanese-American urban community life in the nation. The establishment of a historic district, a memorial sculpture, and programs sponsored by a local council and the Japanese American Museum of San Jose are funded from preservation grants.²⁹ On Bainbridge Island in Washington State, Japanese Americans who returned to their homes after internment are active in planning for a commemorative public park.

Using Home Front Heritage in Modern Society

Identification of home front heritage locations at local, state, and national levels is impressive, but far from complete. Many World War II historic resources have lost integrity; others are recognizable only from remnants. Some are reasonably intact as combinations of archeological and architectural resources, historic landscapes with visible features, and deep emotional associations for particular people. Most states include World War II places in their historic registers, but some cities, counties, and states have not fully addressed their role during the home front era.

Public education programs regarding local wartime heritage exist in some urban and regional museums, particularly those focused on military units, group ethnicity, and internment camps. Home front national life as a museum

education topic is increasing, often where places or significant buildings exist or threshold events occurred. Museum programs and special exhibits depicting home front themes may well increase as wartime anniversary events are planned. More oral histories are needed from participants while still available. Aviation museums display aircraft manufactured at home front plants, often by interracial work crews whose stories should accompany the historic planes.

Pilgrimages, reunions, and gatherings will contribute towards emotional closure, informing younger generations and increasing public awareness. The participants in these events can also act as site stewards to commemorate, monitor, and preserve the resources and the value of their experiences at a place.

The development of heritage tourism surrounding World War II places is beginning. Some states have online tourism information to guide visitors to wartime historic sites as well as recreation opportunities. A National Register of Historic Places travel itinerary for the World War II home front in the San Francisco Bay region is available.³⁰ Tour routes linking a variety of home front sites can give 21st-century Americans a more balanced understanding of the heroic and everyday aspects of global wartime's impact at home.

Preserving archeological and architectural resources related to World War II requires creative thinking by groups and individuals. Site resource inventories, the consideration of impacts of memorial projects, and protection from relic hunters and encroachment are very important elements for future site integrity, significance, and meaning. Preservation easements with private landowners may be useful to achieve some protection objectives.³¹ Listing in the National Register of Historic Places, designation in state and local historic property registries, and other forms of recognition give an official status to a place, often requiring public consideration for zoning or land use changes.

Finally, home front sites and their messages to the American people can best be developed and transmitted by interdisciplinary and cooperative work among specialists, original participants, elected and other officials, and neighboring residents. An open planning process of appropriate scale for the heritage property is essential. A time frame of many years' duration may be needed. Communication plans and websites may be effective and inexpensive ways to reach a broad audience. The recognition of the civic, economic, and historic community values of World War II home front heritage is basic to preserving our nation's cultural resources.

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The author gratefully acknowledges assistance from the following individuals: Linda Cook, manager, Aleutian Island WWII National Historic Area; Karl Gurcke, a historian with Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Site, whose family was held at Crystal City; Rolla Queen, archeologist, Bureau of Land Management Desert District; Anne Vawser, Midwest Archeological Center, National Park Service; Michael R. Waters, professor of anthropology, Texas A&M University; John P. Wilson, consultant, Las Cruces, New Mexico; and reviewers of earlier drafts of this article.

Notes

1. See for example John Morton Blum, *V Was For Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976); John W. Jeffries, *Wartime America: The World War II Home Front*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997); Roger W. Lotchin, ed., *The Way We Really Were: The Golden State in the Second World War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Roger W. Lotchin, *The Bad City in the Good War: San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland, San Diego* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2003); Ronald Takaki, *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2000); and Allan M. Winkler, *Home Front U.S.A.: America During World War II* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2000).

2. Many authors have addressed Great Britain's home front. The following are excellent examples of British heritage preservation overviews: C. S. Dobinson, J. Lake, and A. J. Schofield, "Monuments of War: Defining England's 20th Century Defence Heritage," *Antiquity* 71, No. 272 (1996): 288-298; Christine Finn, "Defiant Britain: Mapping the Bunkers and Pillboxes Built to Stymie a Nazi Invasion," *Archaeology* 53, No. 3 (2000): 42-49; J. Anthony Hellen, "Temporary Settlements and Transient Populations: The Legacy of Britain's Prisoner of War Camps: 1940-1948," *Erdkunde* (University of Bonn) 53, No. 3 (1996): 191-211; David McOmish, David Field, and Graham Brown, *Field Archaeology of the Salisbury Plain Training Area* (London: English Heritage, 2002); John Schofield, "Conserving Recent Military Remains: Choices and Challenges for the Twenty-First Century" in *Managing Historic Sites and Buildings: Balancing Presentation and Preservation*, ed. Gill Chitty and David Baker (London: Routledge and English Heritage, 1999), 173-186.

3. The draft World War II National Historic Home Front theme study is under review. Its status is reported on the National Historic Landmarks website, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nhl/>

4. Fort Carson is addressed in Melissa A. Conner and James Schneck, *The Old Hospital Complex* (5EP1778), *Fort Carson, Colorado* (Final Technical Report), prepared for the Directorate of Environmental Compliance and Management, Fort Carson, CO, by the Midwest Archeological Center (Lincoln, NE: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1996); James Schneck and Karin M. Roberts, *Waste Water Treatment Plant and Incinerator Complex* (5EP2447 and 5EP2446), prepared for the Directorate of Environmental Compliance and Management, Fort Carson, CO, by the Midwest Archeological Center (Lincoln, NE: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1996). The Presidio military complex is addressed in *Presidio of San Francisco: Historic Structures Adaptive Reuse Study*, prepared for Jones & Stokes Associates, Inc. (Sacramento, CA: Page & Turnbull, Inc., 1989). Fort Mason is addressed in R. Patrick Christopher and Erwin N. Thompson, *Historic Structure Report: Western Grounds-Old Parade Ground and MacArthur Avenue* (San Francisco, CA: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1979).

5. A recent overview of the wartime evidence in Hawaii and the Pacific is available from Rex Alan Smith and Gerald A. Meehl, *Pacific Legacy: Image and Memory from World War II in the Pacific* (London and New York: Abbeville Press, 2002).

6. The TRACES conference page is <http://www.traces.org/WWIIstudiesconferences.html> accessed February 18, 2004; Richard E. Osborn, *World War II Sites in the United States: A Tour Guide & Directory* (Indianapolis, IN: Riebel-Roque Publishing Co., 1996); The Japanese

American National Museum in Los Angeles hosts an annual "All Camps Conference" for former detainees, families, educators, researchers, and others.

7. For example, see the following: The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Stephen Fox, *The Unknown Internment: An Oral History of the Relocation of Italian Americans during World War II* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990); Arnold Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War in America* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979); Edward H. Spicer, Asail T. Hansen, Katherine Luomala, and Marvin K. Opler, *Impounded People: Japanese Americans in the Relocation Centers* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1969); Erica Harth, ed., *Last Witnesses: Reflections on the Wartime Internment of Japanese Americans* (New York: Palgrave for St. Martin's Press, 2001)

8. For example, see *Prisoners in Paradise*, produced and directed by Camilla Calamandrei, 60 minutes, distributed by Camilla Calamandrei, P.O. Box 1084, Harriman, NY 10926, 2001, videocassette; and *Nazi POWs in America*, produced and directed by Sharon Young, 50 minutes, Arts and Entertainment Television Networks, 2002, videocassette.

9. Jeffery F. Burton, Mary M. Farrell, Florence B. Lord, and Richard W. Lord, *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites*, Publications in Anthropology No. 74, Western Archeological and Conservation Center (Tucson, AZ: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1999).

10. Jeffery F. Burton, *Three Farewells to Manzanar: The Archeology of Manzanar National Historic Site, California*, Publications in Anthropology No. 67, Western Archeological and Conservation Center (Tucson, AZ: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1996); Jeffery F. Burton, Jeremy D. Haines, and Mary M. Ferrell, *Archeological Investigations at the Manzanar Relocation Center Cemetery, Manzanar National Historic Site*, Publications in Anthropology No. 79, Western Archeological and Conservation Center (Tucson, AZ: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002); Glenn D. Simpson, *Manzanar National Historic Site: Historic Preservation Report: Record of Treatment, Return of Historic Mess Hall to Manzanar National Historic Site* (Santa Fe, NM: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, n.d.); Harlan Unrau, *The Evacuation and Relocation of Persons of Japanese Ancestry During World War II: An Historical Study of the Manzanar War Relocation Center*, Denver Service Center (Denver, CO: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1996).

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World War II Shipwrecks in Truk Lagoon: The Role of Interest Groups

by Bill Jeffery

Chuuk advertises itself as an idyllic tropical paradise in the Pacific Ocean. What sets Chuuk apart from its neighboring islands is its underwater attractions. “The Chuuk lagoon is the final tomb for more than 100 ships, planes, and submarines—the legacy of a fierce World War II battle between the Japanese Imperial Fleet and Allied [primarily the United States] carrier attack planes.” As a tourist website reports, “It is a rare opportunity to find so many shipwrecks so close together and so completely intact.” These simple declarations belie the complexity behind the reality. The World War II material culture constitutes the single largest tourism resource for Chuuk, and the shipwrecks are under increasing pressure and threat.

Truk (now called by its traditional name, Chuuk) was the Imperial Japanese Navy’s Fourth Fleet Base from 1939 and its Combined Fleet Base for nearly two years during World War II. The United States considered Truk the “strongest naval base in the Pacific with the exception of Pearl Harbor.”¹ On February 17 and 18, 1944, the United States began an aerial bombing campaign that effectively took the base out of the war within a few months, and, by ongoing bombing and submarine activity, kept it out of the war to the end.²

Several groups are vitally interested in Chuuk’s World War II underwater historic sites. In the decades after the war’s end, the Chuukese found that a growing number of foreign divers were drawn to the sites, to dive and photograph large shipwrecks in a tropical environment and, for some, to collect World War II artifacts.³ Dive activities greatly expanded from 1970 to 2000 and influenced how the Chuukese regard and treat the sites today—as destinations for diving tourists. Japanese and Americans tourists, however, view them as part of the “Truk Lagoon battleground,” and visit Chuuk to pay respects to fallen colleagues and relatives, renew contacts established during the war, or dive the shipwrecks.

Understanding this heritage and its interest groups is an important consideration in managing this material culture. The Chuukese government and portions of the local community are interested in the underwater sites because of the financial rewards from tourism, which has transformed these former war machines into a vital economic asset. Does this make the sites less important or less significant as historic resources to these groups?

Given the importance of the underwater sites, it is surprising that there have been no major academic or theoretical studies of the World War II underwater cultural heritage in Truk Lagoon, and only two previous management investigations.⁴ This essay addresses the issues facing these sites and their multiple meanings, and suggests possible directions for their management.

Location and Economy of Chuuk

Chuuk is one of four states—with Yap, Pohnpei, and Kosrae—in the Federated States of Micronesia. Chuuk is located approximately 7° north of the Equator and at 152° east longitude—approximately the same as the east coast of Australia. (Figure 1) This “sea of islands” with a total land mass of 270 square miles in a current economic exclusion zone of 1,158,310 square miles make up, in combination with the Republic of Palau, the Caroline Islands. Together with the other island groups, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of Nauru, and the Republic of Kiribati, they form a region that Europeans refer to as Micronesia, and are distinct from the two other Pacific Island regions, Polynesia and Melanesia.

Chuuk consists of 19 “high” islands inside Truk Lagoon, 10 atolls, and 225 “low” coralline islands many of which are outside the lagoon. The high islands are the peaks of volcanic mountains, with a total mass above water of approximately 35 square miles. The lagoon is approximately 40 miles in diameter and is bounded by a barrier reef enclosing approximately 820 square miles. (Figure 2)

The islands are fringed with mangroves that support an abundant and diverse marine life. The fertile high islands contain native trees and plants including breadfruit, coconuts, mango, banana, and taro that, in association with fish, have supported a subsistence lifestyle for the Chuukese for many years.

A significant increase in the population, from 9,185 in 1946 to 60,000 in 2002, and the change to a cash-based economy resulted in less reliance on subsistence living and more on imported food. Government employment is the largest source of income in Chuuk.⁵ Commercial fishing provides the biggest export commodity. Tourism is a major source of revenue, with the World War II shipwrecks the most important tourist attraction. Approximately 3,000 tourists annually dive the shipwrecks (although in 1996 nearly 10,000 tourists visited Chuuk), which are regarded as the “world’s largest collection of artificial reefs”⁶ and “a World War II enthusiast’s dream.”⁷

Brief History of Chuuk

People have inhabited Chuuk for about 2,000 years.⁸ The first Europeans, the Spanish, arrived in 1565, 34 years after Magellan passed by on his first voyage.⁹ Spanish, English, French, American, Russian, and German explorers, traders,

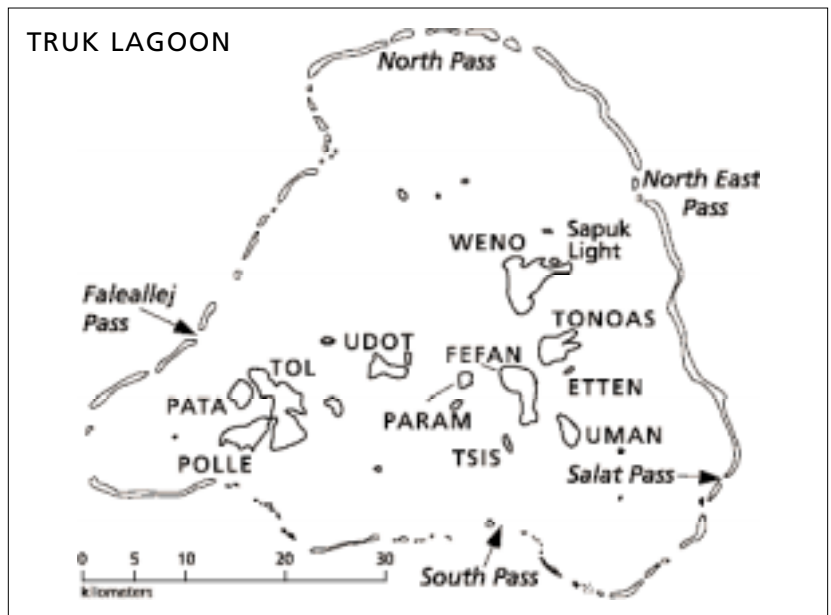
FIGURE 1

Chuuk is one of the four states of the Federated States of Micronesia. (Courtesy of Nature Art, South Australia)



FIGURE 2

Chuuk consists of 19 "high" islands inside Truk Lagoon. (Courtesy of Nature Art, South Australia)



whalers, and missionaries subsequently visited the islands, but the Chuukese were found to be hostile, and it was not until 1886 that the Spanish established a presence and rule over Micronesia, including Chuuk. After the Spanish-American War of 1898, an arrangement among Spain, Germany, and the United States allowed Micronesia, except for Guam, to be purchased by Germany from the United States for about \$4.2 million.¹⁰ At the beginning of World War I, Japan seized the islands in a secret and controversial pact with Great Britain to counter the German presence in the Pacific.

Japanese traders traveled to Micronesia beginning in the 1880s as part of the Meiji Restoration initiatives. Over the next 50 years, until the beginning of World War II, “the Japanese cultivation of the islands had wrought a minor agricultural revolution [in Micronesia]. Although it had but small impact on the empire as a whole, the agricultural activities contributed to the general prosperity of the colony and changed the landscape of the larger islands.”¹¹ In 1914, Japan formally occupied Micronesia and considered it a mandated area under the League of Nations in 1919.

However, through a policy of assimilation, alienation of Micronesians from their land, and intensive migration, the Indigenous population soon found themselves to be “strangers in their own land.”¹² The Japanese navy controlled Micronesia from 1914 to 1922 from its headquarters on Dublon, now called Tonoas, in Chuuk. In 1922, a civilian administration based in Koror, Palau (now Belau), took charge and began aggressively using Micronesia to suit Japan’s needs for economic and strategic expansion.¹³ Japanese immigrants soon out-numbered Micronesians. In 1935, there were 50,000 Japanese throughout Micronesia; in 1942, there were 96,000, while the population of native Micronesians remained approximately 50,000.

By 1937, the Japanese navy was again in control in Micronesia, directing the civilian government in establishing airstrips and sea-plane bases. Truk Lagoon was considered one of the greatest sites for a naval base in the Pacific because of its deep waters and natural protection. The base played a major role in the Japanese expansion in the Pacific, starting with the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

During 1944 and 1945, the United States and its allies bombed Japanese facilities and vessels in Truk Lagoon, sinking more than 50 ships and destroying over 400 aircraft. At the conclusion of World War II, the Japanese departed Micronesia and the United States was designated as trustee by the United Nations. The administration of Micronesia, called the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, was assigned to the United States Navy until 1951 when the U.S. Department of the Interior took over. Over the next 35 years, an agreement on the independence of what became known as the Federated States of Micronesia was negotiated through a system of “Compacts of Free Association” between the United States and the Federated States. Other regions of Micronesia developed separate arrangements with the United States.

As a result of the foreign presence in Micronesia, its people can trace their ancestry to many nations, particularly the Japanese. Many traditional ways of life have changed forever. The country has been left with the remains and scars of occupation and World War II. Lin Poyer and her colleagues Suzanne Falgout and Laurence Marshall Carucci sum it up well: “The war forced a rethinking of cultural values, and it expanded islanders’ knowledge of global

military, political, and economic realities. World War II in Micronesia meant, in short, both terrible suffering and momentous change. Nothing would ever be the same again.”¹⁴

Shipwrecks in Truk Lagoon

On February 4, 1944, a United States reconnaissance flight over Truk Lagoon observed nearly 60 ships, including the super battleship *Musashi*, the flagship of the Japanese navy; 2 aircraft carriers; 4 heavy cruisers; 3 light cruisers; 9 destroyers; 2 submarines; and over 30 tanker, repair, and transport ships.¹⁵ The reconnaissance flight alerted the Japanese commanders to a possible United States attack and, as a result, most of the fleet departed for Palau the following week, leaving the transport ships behind to unload cargo.

FIGURE 3
The bombing of Tonoas, Truk Lagoon, started in February 1944 and continued until August 1945. (Courtesy of Micronesian Seminar, Pohnpei)



The United States carried out two major air attacks on Truk, February 17 and 18, and April 30 and May 1, 1944. Attacks by B-24 and B-29 aircraft continued every few days until August 1945, dropping a total of 6,878 tons of bombs over the 18-month “blockade” of the Truk base. The loss of human life was considerable. Over 4,000 Japanese, 120 Chuukese, 30 Americans, 2 British, and several other nationals, including those from Nauru, Okinawa, and Korea, were killed or wounded as a result of the bombardment. (Figure 3)

The 51 ships sunk in Truk Lagoon include a group of 8 warships, comprised of 4 submarine chasers (130-420 tons), one submarine of 1,785 tons, 2 destroyers (each approximately 1,500 tons), one 935-ton patrol boat, and some smaller landing craft; 39 armed transport ships and tankers ranging in size from a few hundred tons to the 11,614-ton submarine tender *Heian Maru* (the largest ship in the lagoon); the 8,614-ton armed transport *Kiyosumi Maru* (which is representative of the 39 transport ships sunk); and 3 tugs.¹⁶ (Figure 4) This list does not include the many smaller craft reported sunk.¹⁷

Many of the ships were anchored and unloading their cargo of oil, tanks, sea mines, vehicles, aircraft, and other war machinery, foodstuffs, alcohol, and medicines. The ships included the *Fujikawa Maru*, a 6,938-ton armed transport that still contains “zero” aircraft (the Japanese nickname given to its successful single-engine fighter plane, which the Americans codenamed a “zeke”) in its holds (Figure 5 and Figure 6); the *Shinkoku Maru*, a 10,020-ton oil tanker that assisted the Japanese fleet that struck Pearl Harbor; and the 10,437-ton armed transport, *Aikoku Maru*, that sank after a huge explosion and killed over 730 soldiers and crew. Destroyers and other ships attempting to flee the bombing sank near the passages through the encircling reef.

Aircraft in Truk Lagoon

The remains of nine Japanese and one American World War II aircraft have been found in Truk Lagoon.¹⁸ During the bombing campaign, nearly 450 planes were lost, including 416 Japanese aircraft (the majority of which were destroyed on the ground before take-off), 26 United States naval aircraft (including helldivers, hellcats, kingfishers, avengers, and a Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless), several British planes (a British carrier was attacked in June 1945), and 5 or 6 U.S. Air Force B-24s.¹⁹ Japanese aircraft found inside the lagoon include zero fighters, dive bombers, reconnaissance aircraft, a larger two-engine bomber, and a four-engine flying boat.

Previous Studies Related to Chuuk’s Cultural Heritage

A majority of the studies of Chuuk and the Federated States have focused on the anthropology, ethnography, and archeology of the Indigenous Micronesians.²⁰ Although several studies address the history of foreign powers associated with Chuuk,²¹ little work has been devoted to the Spanish, German, and American material culture. Most work on “foreign” material culture has been carried out on the Japanese-period sites. In his study, Duane Colt Denfield found that “Truk is rich in World War II sites. It has in situ as many guns as all of Europe.”²²

A number of studies have addressed the impact of World War II on the Indigenous Pacific Islanders,²³ reporting that “those who experienced the intense suffering during the Japanese military buildup and the American campaign describe it as the greatest hardship they ever endured.”²⁴ For World War II underwater cultural heritage, there are several “popular” texts²⁵ and a few consultant reports,²⁶ but no scholarly studies.

Current Status of the Sites

Although some salvage was carried out on the shipwrecks a few years after the war, and the effects of storms and people have taken their toll, the shipwrecks

FIGURE 4

The Kiyosumi Maru is representative of the 39 armed transports sunk during the bombing of Truk Lagoon. (Courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, United Kingdom)

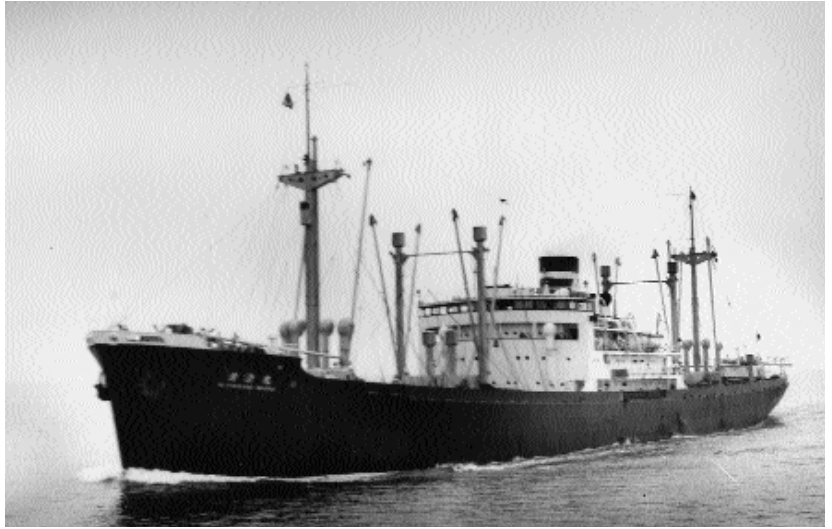


FIGURE 5

A view of the Fujikawa Maru shows its bow and bow gun on the deck. (Courtesy of Greg Adams, South Australia)

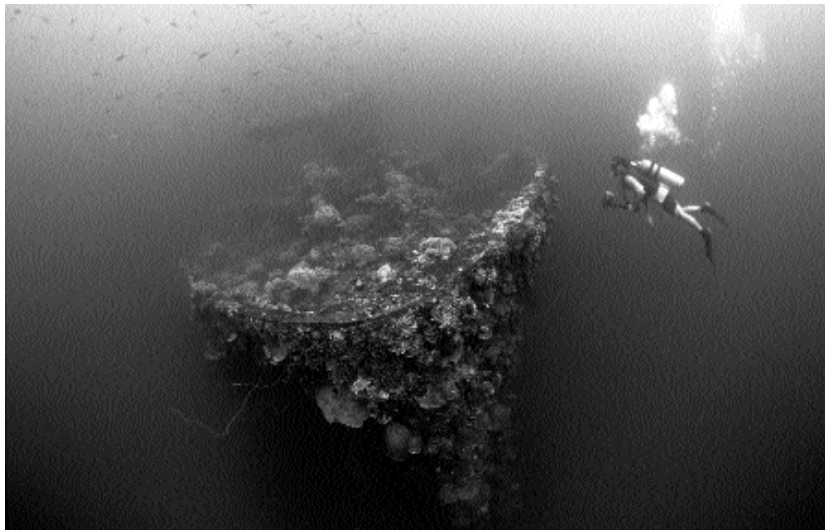
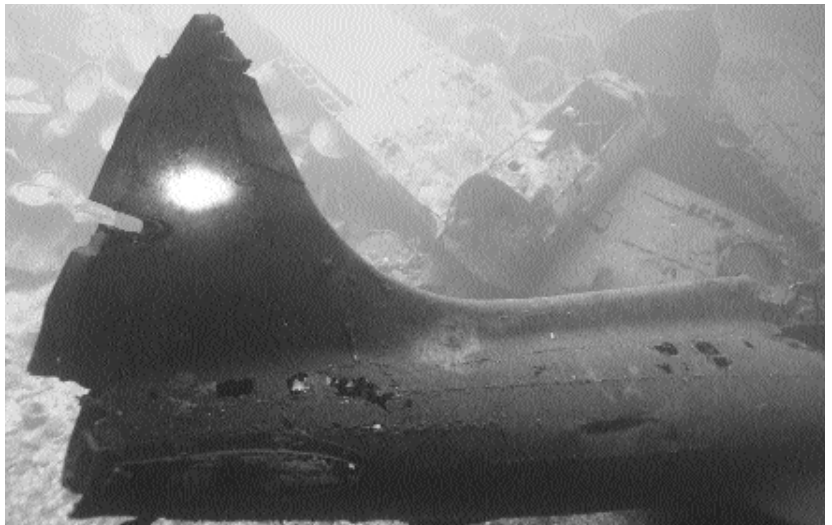


FIGURE 6

This view illustrates part of a "claude" (in the foreground) and a "zero" aircraft behind in the hold of the Fujikawa Maru. (Courtesy of the author)



are essentially intact and still contain much of their cargo. Their environment has helped maintain the integrity of the ships; many are in 100-200 feet of water and protected by the reef from the effects of currents, winds, and ocean swells. The shipwrecks attract colorful and diverse marine life, causing them to be called “one of the great undersea wonders of the world.”²⁷

The shipwrecks and aircraft located in Truk Lagoon are protected under Chuukese, Federated States, and United States law.²⁸ The United States has designated the “Japanese Fleet” or “Chuuk (Truk) Lagoon Monument” a National Historic Landmark and listed it in the National Register of Historic Places. Under Chuukese and Federated States designations, it is illegal to interfere with these sites, punishable by fine or imprisonment. Federated States legal protection covers all artifacts on land and underwater that are older than 30 years. Primarily designed to manage diving on the shipwrecks, Chuuk law protects only Japanese war material below high water, and does not address American war material.

FIGURE 7
The Sapporo Maru was located during a 2002 side-scan sonar survey of shipwrecks. (Courtesy of Jeremy Green, Western Australia)



The Chuuk government is responsible for managing the Japanese wrecks, a task made more complex due to the lack of baseline data, overlapping jurisdiction among Chuuk government agencies, conflicting priorities for available funding and staff (an estimated \$90,000 is raised each year from dive permits), inconsistent enforcement, insufficient public interpretation, and foreign management systems in a society with different values and priorities.

An example of the management difficulty is the recent discovery of a shipwreck in Truk Lagoon. The *Sapporo Maru* was located during a 2002 side-scan sonar survey conducted by Jeremy Green from the Western Australian Maritime Museum and the author as part of a Historic Preservation Fund-

supported project.²⁹ (Figure 7) After diving the shipwreck and verifying its identity, the ship's bell was found in position on the bridge. However, within 24 hours, the bell was gone. Police discovered that the bell was removed by a dive guide and hidden on site. The police concluded that this was not an illegal act because the bell was not removed from the site, although the bell had been moved in a way that damaged that part of the ship.

This act was seen by some as a way to safeguard important parts of the shipwrecks. A ship's bell, made of brass and engraved with the name of the ship, would be "the prize" for many divers seeking souvenirs. Residents know that trafficking in shipwreck artifacts occurs, and fear that this bell, reported to be the last in situ from the Truk Lagoon shipwrecks, could be lost. The current location of the bell is unknown, but the bell is rumored to still be on the *Sapporo Maru*, and efforts to have the bell turned over to the Chuuk Historic Preservation Office have proved unsuccessful.³⁰

Tourists have been diving the shipwrecks and aircraft for 30 years and the wrecks show signs of wear and tear. Made of iron, steel, or aluminum and located in a marine environment, the shipwrecks' and aircrafts' current state of integrity was studied by Ian MacLeod as part of another Historic Preservation Fund-supported project during the first-ever corrosion survey of the sites in 2002. (Figure 8) Corrosion surveys are important to predicting the rate of corrosion, and perhaps collapse, of the sites. From his initial survey, MacLeod found: "Based on this provisional estimate of perforation times, many of the wrecks in Chuuk Lagoon will retain their existing integrity for only the next ten to fifteen years before they begin to undergo significant collapse. This has major implications for the management of the sites and for the safety of divers undertaking penetration dives."³¹ It also has major implications for any fuel and oil in the bunkers of the ships, which if released in an uncontrolled manner could lead to grave environmental consequences.

Other issues include artifacts that are removed to the decks for better photography; unintentional damage to the ship's structure; and the effect of divers' bubbles on accelerating corrosion and causing the release of fuel. Years of poor mooring practices have also taken their toll on the shipwrecks' integrity. While the live-aboard charter operators established and funded their own moorings on some sites, more are needed, and better practices are required for the smaller boats. The shipwrecks also contain munitions, some of which are used to make bombs for "dynamite fishing." Explosions damage nearby flora and fauna and the shipwrecks themselves.

Typhoons constitute another impact that is known, but has not been studied. The marine life and material culture located at depths of more than 60 feet have been disturbed from storms and typhoons, renewing corrosion and destroying fragile artifacts.

Significance of the Underwater Cultural Heritage Sites

Understanding the significance of cultural heritage sites is the most important management tool. Information should be gathered from the point of view of the local community and preservation practitioners, given that they will have the most impact on the sites' management. The significance of the World War II underwater cultural heritage sites to the Chuukese has never been clearly analyzed, hence the need for this research. Dirk Spennemann states that—

*The Pacific Cultures are societies founded and rooted in oral traditions and oral histories. Tangible remainders of the past are of lesser importance, if at all. Thus, for many Pacific Islanders the historical Second World War remains signified little and if they did, they were reminders of that painful period. The entire period would have been repressed, or the negative images ignored and forgotten by many, were it not for all those who come to see just these sites.*³²

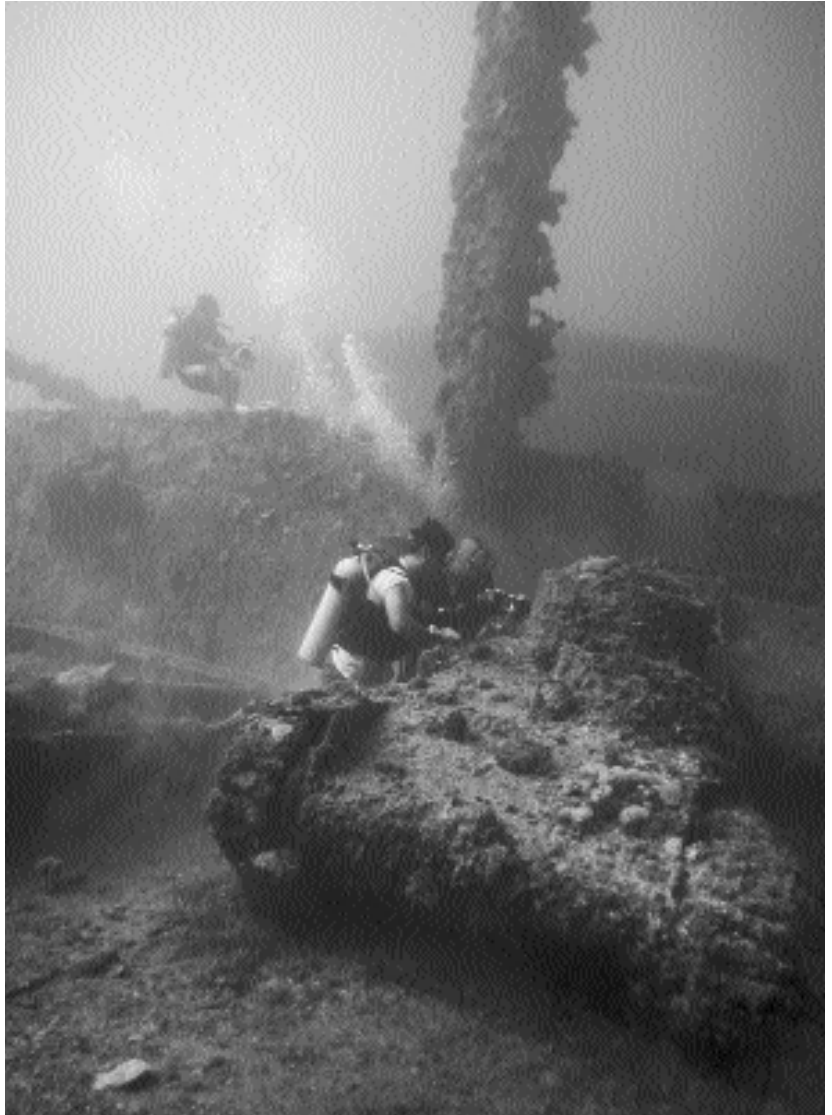
In a different view of this issue, Geoffrey Miles White and Lamont Carl Lindstrom state, “World War II has sedimented into an intense—if narrow—band in the stratigraphy of social and individual histories [of many Pacific Islands].”³³ Lin Poyer and her colleagues assert that “Physical mementos of war hold little historical interest for most Micronesians, who may use them for practical value.” They add, “Micronesian nations, however, have recognized the cultural importance of the Pacific war by sponsoring locally produced videos,” and “The favorite film at the Truk Trading Company movie theater in the mid-1950s was the documentary ‘The Bombing of Truk’.” The authors based this assessment on oral histories from over 300 Micronesian survivors. Lin Poyer and her colleagues have written—

*Our project is one of the most recent to benefit from Micronesians' concern about the war and perpetuation of its memory. We received whole hearted assistance from every level of government and from the people we interviewed. They want to preserve this history and to correct the imbalance that makes Islanders nearly invisible in American and Japanese accounts of the Pacific war. Their desire to assume a more visible role in the history of the war is expressed in musings about construction of their own war memorials, though only Guam and Saipan now preserve memorials and parks devoted to Micronesian experiences.*³⁴

One approach to understanding how the submerged sites are regarded by the Chuukese may be to examine how World War II sites on land are viewed. Are there differences in their treatment that can be attributed to the site's significance? Terrestrial sites are essentially left untouched, letting the jungle reclaim much of the cleared land and structures, or accessed as Chuukese homes. The World War II shipwrecks and aircraft are promoted as a diving attraction, and yet the terrestrial sites are equally numerous and many intact, but are not similarly promoted as tourist destinations.

FIGURE 8

Ian MacLeod and Andy Viduka took corrosion measurements on a tank on the deck of the Nippo Maru in April 2002. (Courtesy of the author)



What factors influence this treatment? Factors could include the suffering that resulted from the bombing, the occupation by the Japanese, and the need of the Chuukese to forget this painful period in their history. In his study of Chuukese views of a Chuukese-Japanese site and a Japanese World War II memorial on Fefan—one of the lagoon’s major islands where the surrounding landscape has been ignored by the Chuukese—Paul Rainbird stated, “...a landscape with its associated remembrances may be intensified by its abandonment, by its discontinuity in its use. In fact, the abandoned landscape may be as much a memorial as is the structure erected for the purpose by the Japanese.”³⁵ During a survey of terrestrial sites on Tonoas with the mayor and chiefs, this author found that the Japanese war sites were reminders to the Chuukese of how they suffered during the war and how some Chuukese lost their lives during the establishment of these facilities.³⁶ An emotional attach-

ment to the sites was apparent as well as no great desire to change their status quo through site conservation, restoration, or promotion.

The shipwrecks are also associated with death and destruction—destruction of Japanese ships and the death of Japanese sailors and soldiers. No oral or material evidence was found by this author to suggest that the Chuukese community has the same emotional attachment to the shipwrecks as to the terrestrial sites. This could be interpreted to mean that because the terrestrial sites are revered, they are left in their current form. The underwater sites are promoted, developed, and disturbed, and thus are not revered.

On the other hand, are the different ways in which the terrestrial and underwater sites are treated and valued related to traditional ownership in the different environments and the associated resources? Research reveals that the lagoon is not owned by clans or families, unlike the islands and the reefs where clan or family ownership is of paramount importance. While landowners are guarded and very sensitive about any outside interest in sites on their land, shipwrecks and aircraft in the lagoon, unless located on a reef, do not elicit the same interests.

The shipwrecks are a valuable economic resource for Chuuk, and portions of the Chuukese community understand the need to manage the resources appropriately. While the majority of American tourists regard the shipwrecks as diving destinations rather than as significant historic sites,³⁷ to the Japanese, the underwater sites are “war graves.” At least twice, human remains have been retrieved for burial; on other occasions, the Chuuk government has reportedly denied official Japanese requests to retrieve human remains.³⁸ Japanese who were stationed in Chuuk during the war and the descendants of these soldiers and sailors are frequent visitors coming to pay their respects to fallen colleagues. A recent public notice from the United States Department of State contained a number of statements on how the United States and some other countries view sunken warships and aircraft, including the following statement from the Government of Japan, communicated on September 13, 2000—

*According to international law, sunken State vessels, such as warships and vessels on government service, regardless of location or of the time elapsed remain the property of the State owning them at the time of their sinking unless it explicitly and formally relinquishes its ownership. Such sunken vessels should be respected as maritime graves. They should not be salvaged without the express consent of the Japanese Government.*³⁹

When considering the significance of the Truk Lagoon World War II underwater sites, it should be remembered that the Chuuk underwater resources are associated with a war that “was waged by 56 nations and cost well over 50 million lives. It was thus the most violent and prolonged self-inflicted injury on

mankind of which history has record.”⁴⁰ For military historians, the area is important for its role in charting the future of naval warfare. In the *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, Samuel Morison stated that “The [United States] strike on Truk demonstrated a virtual revolution in naval warfare; the aircraft carrier emerged as the capital ship of the future, with unlimited potentialities.”⁴¹

To date, little value has been placed on the Truk Lagoon sites for their archeological significance. Is this because they are associated with a war that ended just 60 years ago? Many Japanese records were destroyed or lost at the conclusion of the war. Given the quality and quantity of the material remains in Truk Lagoon, the sites are a valuable source of information on how Japan was equipping this major base and coping with the American blockade and bombing.

Site Protection and Management

Long-term management needs of the underwater resources in Truk Lagoon should incorporate the views of the three pertinent nationalities. Because the sites are located in Chuuk under control of the local government, site management practices, particularly further research and interpretation, should include explaining the significance of the sites to the Chuukese. Better understanding of the sites’ role in the history of Chuuk may provide a more general sense of ownership of the sites and enhance the sites’ preservation. The Chuuk Historic Preservation Office took steps toward this better understanding through another Historic Preservation Fund-supported project that produced a booklet and the installation of interpretive signs on two of the main islands in Chuuk—Weno and Tonoas.⁴²

Given that the majority of Chuukese do not dive, they may not be aware of the extraordinary nature of these underwater sites. Comparing the World War II underwater sites with land sites (that are readily visible to most Chuukese) may raise the local value of the underwater sites. Enhanced interpretation may extend to upgrading the Chuuk government’s interpretive program in the visitors bureau on Weno (the seat of Chuuk’s government) on the culture and history of the Chuukese before, during, and after the war. Research by the Federated States’ Department of Immigration and the visitors bureau shows that the number of tourists has dropped by about 60 percent from 1996 levels. Research into the causes and effects of this decline may be advisable.⁴³

Surveys of the shipwreck and aircraft sites should be conducted, particularly more detailed mapping of the material located on individual shipwreck and aircraft sites. Such surveys could be seen to be parts of longer, research-oriented projects. Raising scholarly interest would be helpful in understanding the significance of the sites and in their management. Other surveys could include traditional Chuukese sites located underwater, such as fish traps and any other

evidence of earlier habitation, so that a more complete picture of the underwater cultural heritage for Chuuk can be developed.

In addition to raising the profile of sites significant to the Chuukese through surveys, research, and interpretation, corrosion surveys should continue in conjunction with a biological survey because of the impact of dynamite fishing and storms on the deterioration of the ships' structure and the potential leakage of oil and fuel.

Conclusions

To Japanese and American war veterans, Truk Lagoon is a tangible reminder of World War II, the human and material losses, and the Allies' victory. To the Chuukese and Japanese, the lagoon is associated with the deaths and hardships suffered during the 18-month blockade and bombardment, a time that included considerable suffering and the overwhelming alienation of the Chuukese from their land and resources.

While the United States contributes considerable support to help finance government operations, the Chuukese people are impoverished and, as a practical matter, historic preservation is a low priority. Effective management of the sites will be difficult in the current economic and social climate in Chuuk. Even a country with a viable economy and a prosperous society would find the effective management of over 50 large shipwrecks and numerous aircraft daunting.

Differences over the significance of the underwater sites can create conflict in how they should be managed. How should these conflicts be resolved and what do they mean for site management? Given that the sites are important to several countries, all interested parties should be consulted. A cooperative and comprehensive management approach among all stakeholders may be the most efficient approach to preserving the underwater cultural heritage of Chuuk.

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Historic Places and the Diversity Deficit in Heritage Conservation

by Ned Kaufman

The United States has always been diverse. Now it is more so than ever. Yet historic preservation has done little to address this reality. How should historic preservation present racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse historical experiences? How should it serve diverse constituencies?

Between the nation's history as presented at its historic sites and as lived by its people lies a significant diversity gap. In 2002, the National Park Service launched a new initiative, called the Cultural Heritage Needs Assessment, aimed at shrinking the persistent diversity deficit. This article is drawn from the project's report.¹ It concentrates on one aspect of the assessment's findings, historic places, and concludes with a practical proposal for a program that the Federal Government could launch to quickly narrow the diversity gap using historic places.

While the assessment was designed to provide information and advice to the Federal Government's preservation programs, its findings are relevant to private and other government preservation programs as well. Readers seeking to close the diversity gap within their local preservation organization or historical society, statewide nonprofit, or municipal or state agency should easily be able to adapt the assessment's information and suggestions to their particular circumstances.

Background

Throughout most of its history, the preservation profession did not consider diversity an important issue. Yet, by the 1980s, some preservation agencies and organizations were making serious efforts to incorporate African-American heritage into mainstream historic preservation work. The Alabama Historical Commission founded a Black Heritage Council in 1984, and Georgia's State Historic Preservation Office published a guide to historic black resources in the same year.² Historic places like Colonial Williamsburg or, more recently, Cane River Creole National Historical Park, restored African Americans to the historical picture and began to present slavery in a forthright way.³

The National Trust for Historic Preservation organized its 1992 annual conference around the theme of diversity and launched scholarship and training programs to nurture preservation leaders from minority communities. Congress

and the National Park Service mounted a number of initiatives, including establishment of new national parks, improvements in the way national parks are interpreted, preservation grants to historically black colleges and universities, the Cultural Resources Diversity Program, the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program, and the Civil Rights in America theme study. While institutional recognition of minority heritage continued to focus on African-American heritage, Congress and the National Park Service also have made substantial efforts to recognize Native-American heritage.

During the 1990s, two major preservation battles in New York City—for the 18th-century African Burial Ground and the Audubon Ballroom (site of Malcolm X's assassination)—illustrate both the benefits and difficulties of engaging diversity. Despite vigorous citizen participation, the preservation establishment's participation was less than whole-hearted. The resolutions to both campaigns were equivocal: a slice of the Audubon's facade and a portion of the interior were preserved as the frontispiece to an unsympathetic new building, and a small portion of the African Burial Ground within the excavated portion of the site was left intact, with reinterment of the exhumed human remains. Commemorative artwork and exhibits formed part of both compromises.

The two campaigns helped lead this author and others to launch a new program in 1998, *Place Matters*, which sought to identify, celebrate, and protect places of significance to New York's communities—places associated with history, tradition, or local symbolism. Though not explicitly designed or promoted as a solution to long-standing problems of racial imbalance, *Place Matters* made conscious efforts to recognize sites associated with African-American, Latino, Native-American, and other nonwhite, nonmajority cultures, along with ethnic European-American experiences.

Disappointingly, however, alliances forged during the campaigns of the 1990s—between, for example, preservationists and environmental justice leaders—did not survive beyond the heat of battle or prompt far-reaching change. Without a compelling reason to unite, it was easier for leaders on both sides to revert to business as usual. At the end of the decade, mainstream preservation organizations and programs in New York looked much as they had at the beginning.

This is broadly true of the field. Despite a great deal of talk about diversity and some successful programs, preservation's core institutions remain largely unchanged. The profession continues to regard minority perspectives and issues as exceptional or special cases. Basic preservation work remains relatively untouched. The National Register of Historic Places provides a case in point. National Park Service policy calls on the agency to "present factual and balanced presentations of the many American cultures, heritages, and histories."⁴ Although the bureau has mounted important diversity initiatives, of over

77,000 properties listed in the National Register as of April 20, 2004, only about 1,300 are explicitly associated with African-American heritage, 90 with Hispanic, and 67 with Asian. Taken together, these properties amount to 3 percent of what is intended to be a comprehensive inventory of the nation's heritage.⁵ The National Park Service is not solely responsible for the situation, nor can the bureau easily correct it. Under federal law, the State Historic Preservation Offices, federal agencies, and Indian tribes are the sources of nominations to the National Register.

The statistics reveal two diversity deficits. First, the national inventory of historic sites has not begun to fully recognize the experiences of communities outside the mainstream. Second, recognition of Asian and Latino heritage continues to lag far behind that of African-American heritage. Preservationists cannot close the second gap without also closing the first. They cannot close either gap by hoping that badly served constituents will compete with each other for a small measure of recognition. The goal is to create a thorough and accurate picture of American history: all Americans have a stake in achieving that goal.

The Cultural Heritage Needs Assessment

The Cultural Heritage Needs Assessment aimed to “gain a better understanding of what aspects of cultural heritage are important to minority cultures”—African, Asian, and Hispanic American—“and what the Federal Government's cultural programs could do to better address these aspects of heritage.”⁶ It set out to survey what heritage experts within minority communities want, based on their own words, and to recommend practical steps by which government agencies could use this information to improve the performance of historic preservation. The assessment covered a wide range of preservation topics—museum work, archives, the written record, publishing, folklore and ethnography, parks, historic sites, plaques and markers, heritage tourism, place-based education, cultural landscapes, and even the operation of bookstores at historic sites. The assessment documented significant heritage programs that are being carried out by minority communities on many of these topics. The assessment also documented unmet needs for government assistance, both technical and financial, in collection, curation, and conservation, as well as opportunities in ethnography, cultural landscapes, parkland acquisition, and other topics.

One of the assessment's most striking findings was to document a tremendous unmet demand for historic places—that is, formally recognized places—that tell the stories of minority communities and tell them well—with candor, generosity of information, a flair for teaching, and a willingness to reach out and engage the unseen but important issues that surround them. This is good news for preservationists, who are uniquely experienced at recognizing and preserv-

ing historic places. Preservationists, in short, can narrow the diversity deficit by doing what they are already good at doing in concert with energetic and well-informed people who are willing to work with them in every community.

Methodology of the Cultural Heritage Needs Assessment

An important model for the Cultural Heritage Needs Assessment is the 1990 report, *Keepers of the Treasures*, which presented a powerful statement of tribal preservation needs and led to significant advances in federal programs.⁷ However, there are important differences. Unlike tribes, African, Asian, and Hispanic Americans are not officially recognized entities, and they cannot be treated according to a government-to-government model. Furthermore, while the major constituency for tribal preservation programs could be assumed to be future tribal members, similar assumptions could not be made about the groups now being considered, particularly in light of an evolving immigration picture.

Another point of difference with *Keepers of the Treasures* was that, unlike many tribes, African, Asian, or Hispanic-American communities do not have officially recognized heritage spokespersons. The Cultural Heritage Needs Assessment did not consult with spokespersons, but rather dedicated experts and amateurs, representing various points of view, who were willing to talk. Most of the study's respondents were professionals in some aspect of heritage conservation; some were citizen leaders. Respondents included first-generation immigrants as well as the descendants of Spanish landowners, teachers, architects, poets, artists, archivists, museum professionals, students, dentists, heritage tourism operators, government officials, activists, film makers, anthropologists, historians, literary scholars, and professional preservationists. Respondents covered a wide age range; and they lived in California, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and the Philippines.

The project's limited resources and time-frame prompted another pragmatic decision. To present the heritage preservation needs of the "Latino community" or the "Asian-American community" would have been not only impossible but presumptuous. "There is no real 'Latino community,'" writes Miguel Vasquez: "Instead, there are many."⁸ Indeed, even national labels turn out to mask great complexity. "Filipinos are so diverse," sighs Angel Velasco Shaw, one of the study's respondents: "our histories are so complicated."⁹ Many Filipino immigrants experienced life in this country as farm workers, but others were nurses, doctors, and cooks; still others were artists, writers, and architects. Life in New York City was different from the west coast. Immigrants from different parts of the Philippine archipelago brought different cultures with them. Those who migrated immediately after World War II may have a different outlook on Filipino history than those who migrated during the Marcos dictatorship.

A pragmatic balance was needed between extreme fragmentation and overly broad generalization. The assessment focused on African Americans (excluding recent immigrant groups), Mexican Americans, and Filipino Americans. While other groups might equally well have been chosen, these three have had great importance in American history. Africans, Mexicans, and Filipinos were among the earliest immigrants to North America. Africans arrived with the Spanish and Portuguese in the 16th century and with the English at the beginning of the 17th century. To Spanish colonists in Mexico, what later became our "southwest" was their "northeast," and when English-speaking colonists moved into the region, they found missions, presidios, and pueblos containing close to 100,000 people.¹⁰ Chicana artist Judith Baca points out, "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us." Filipinos first reached North America during the 16th century as sailors aboard Spanish galleons and some certainly reached California. The first permanent Filipino settlement seems to have been made during the 18th century near New Orleans.

The relationships between the United States and these three groups have been long, close, and sometimes troubled. Episodes such as the slave trade, the Mexican-American War, and the Philippine-American War cannot be forgotten. Nor can 50 years of colonial rule in the Philippines or the enduring realities of racism and intolerance in the United States. There have been positive episodes too. The point is that each region and its people are intricately braided into America's history.

As diverse as these groups and the assessment's respondents are, some significant convergences of opinion emerged. Many respondents whose experiences and opinions were otherwise quite different argued forcefully for the importance of historic places as a means of conserving heritage. This was a significant and somewhat unexpected finding. Since preserving historic places is such a central part of current preservation practice, it suggested that the preservation needs of respondents might prove to be closely in line with professional norms. In fact, the reality is not so simple.

The possibility had to be considered, first of all, that respondents were telling the interviewer what they thought he wanted to hear. That this was not the case is suggested by the open skepticism of many respondents. This was far from the first time they had been consulted by well-meaning interviewers from mainstream organizations. They were not convinced that the project would lead to concrete results. They wanted to convey hard truths, rather than ingratiating platitudes. Some also were highly critical of historic preservation, which they saw as consistently oblivious to their interests.

If respondents' emphasis on historic places seemed to be an affirmation of historic preservation, that affirmation sprang from an engagement with history that is richer and more intense than that of most mainstream preservation-

ists—which constitutes a worthy challenge to the profession. To grasp the potential of historic-place programs for narrowing the diversity gap, it is essential to understand this view of history and its importance.

The Centrality of History

“History is important,” says Alan Bergano, “because it is the foundation of a people.” Like Bergano, many respondents feel that they cannot take history for granted, because history shapes identity and describes relationships with the majority culture that, in turn, defines life in crucial ways. History requires constant attention. Evidence of achievement must be unearthed, underlined, spotlighted. Memories of discrimination and suffering must be maintained. And sometimes evidence of mere existence, of presence within the larger story, must be discovered and defended. This is because much of history lies forgotten or buried. Before becoming part of *heritage*, history must be rediscovered.

For a long time the experience of slavery was glossed over with little explanation, even excused as benign or unimportant. Putting slavery back into the story required energy and persistence. Today some Filipinos are intent on restoring historical awareness of the Philippine-American War, and others on rediscovering the historical experiences of immigrants from the Marcos era, while some African Americans are bringing back to light the history of urban churches and their pastors. Arte Público Press, based at the University of Houston, has launched an ambitious project, “Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage,” to rediscover, catalog, and publish the rich and largely forgotten literary heritage of Hispanic Americans.

History, then, has little in common with the appreciation of the “finer things” that the word *heritage* frequently connotes, or with the “souvenir history” that Puerto Rican poet Martín Espada derides—the superficial and congratulatory commemoration of symbolic highlights.¹¹ History does not paint the past as “simpler times”; it is instead a relentless struggle to discover, uncover, rediscover, and recover facts about the national past that have been swept from public consciousness either because they are uncomfortable or because the evidence is ephemeral. For many respondents, history is what Antonia Castañeda calls “oppositional history”: history of groups that have had to fight for rights or recognition, and history in opposition to stereotypes and social amnesia—history opposed to forgetting.

John Kuo Wei Tchen stresses, nonetheless, that the goal of this kind of history is not opposition but, rather, reconciliation, specifically *racial* reconciliation. Referring to lawyer and scholar Eric Yamamoto’s study of the subject,¹² he underlines the importance of three steps towards reconciliation: recognition, redress, and finally reconciliation itself. The process can be described backwards. Reconciliation is achieved when people of different races and ethnici-

ties accept one another as equals, forgive past wrongs, and withdraw barriers to equal participation in society. This requires redress: acknowledgment of wrongs and a commitment to correct them. Redress rests on recognition, and the key to this essential first step, in Tchen's view, is to educate Americans about the history of intergroup relationships.

Sometimes confronting these relationships causes discomfort—not only among white people. Referring to slavery, Jeanne Cyriaque, African-American programs coordinator for Georgia's State Historic Preservation Division, notes that "some African Americans feel it's a part of the past that they want to forget." Talking about painful historical episodes requires tact as well as honesty. Yet Tchen believes that such discussions are an essential step towards reconciliation and increased social harmony. So does William E. Davis, a New York architect who took part in the campaign to save the African Burial Ground. Davis looks to South Africa's great experiment in truth and reconciliation as a source of inspiration for Americans.

Historical Themes

Among the diverse themes of African, Mexican, and Filipino-American history, some appear with significant persistence: manual labor, persecution, exclusion, struggles for justice, achievement, contribution to society, sheer survival—and invisibility.

"I am an invisible man," announces the black protagonist of Ralph Ellison's novel of 1952, "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me."¹³ Many respondents identified invisibility as a defining part of their community's historical experience. In Los Angeles, the historic Merced Theater still stands, but guides fail to mention that it was a Spanish-language theater in the 1850s. "They erased that history," comments Nicolás Kanellos. Traveling through California, Angel Shaw knows that Filipino migrant laborers once cultivated the fields around her, yet sees no trace of them in the landscape; their history has become invisible. Shaw wants this heritage to be revealed, perhaps by putting up plaques, or by teaching about it in schools—some means that would proclaim: "There were labor camps. *Right here.*"

Mexican and Filipino heritage advocates understand how places like New York's African Burial Ground or Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge have helped to make African-American history visible. "To be able to go to Selma and say, I've crossed the bridge," muses Refugio Rochin, "We need opportunities for reflection like that."

Making Diverse Communities Visible

Explaining the importance of historic places, historian James Horton remarks that “It is easier to understand the people of history when you can be in the spaces that they occupied, the spaces where they lived their lives.”¹⁴ Tchen takes the argument further: gaining public recognition for historic places helps make invisible communities visible; it also helps educate other Americans about them. For Luis Francia, a Filipino-American poet and journalist, “it’s important to have visible artifacts,” the artifact may be a site, monument, or marker, but whatever it is, “it reminds people that at a certain time, and at this place, there were people who lived here, achieved something, and contributed to society.”

Opportunities to designate, interpret, and protect places are clearly very large. While the assessment does not include a historic places survey, it does categorize the types of places emphasized by respondents.

Points of origin

Some respondents want more focus on places associated with entry into the United States or early experiences here. For Bradford Grant, Jamestown, Virginia, is “incredible—very rich historically. As one of the first sites where Africans were enslaved and brought to this country, the place is as significant for African Americans as for European Americans.” Ronald Buenaventura calls San Diego the “gateway to Filipino-American immigration” that should be recognized, as should El Paso’s role, in Judith Baca’s words, as the “Ellis Island of the Southwest.” Baca also wants to mark early Spanish land grants.

Routes of migration

Migration has been crucial for all three groups, both to and within this country. Judith Baca would like to see the “major movements of the Mexican diaspora” presented. Inspired by Boston’s Black Heritage Trail, Joan May Cordova imagines a map showing Filipino migration routes throughout the United States. Adélmara Alcántara would like to trace these migrations back to their origins in the Philippines. She would also like to mark the seasonal migrations of Filipino crop workers. John W. Franklin notes that recent research in Louisiana allows the National Park Service to tell visitors where the state’s African-American families came from.

Places of experience

Asparagus fields near Stockton, California, cotton fields in the South, salmon canneries in Alaska, agricultural labor camps, sugar plantations in Hawaii, hospitals, military bases, tenements almost everywhere, downtown neighborhoods in many American cities, dance halls in South Texas, union halls, Spanish land grants, barrios in many towns and cities, churches and lodges, sites of Filipino businesses, a carrot warehouse in Grants, New Mexico—all are places where African Americans, Mexicans, and Filipinos lived and worked in significant

numbers. Each respondent has a personal list of important sites that convey the experience of ordinary immigrants, places that offer extraordinary opportunities, in Horton's words, to "understand the people of history." (Figure 1)

Places of suffering and struggle

Many historic places associated with slavery are interpreted far better now than 10 or 20 years ago, and places connected with the Underground Railroad and the Civil Rights movement are increasingly popular. (Figure 2) Places of Mexican and Filipino suffering and struggle, however, remain largely ignored. "We should be marking...places where César Chávez worked," says Judith Baca. Refugio Rochin agrees, noting especially the 250-mile route of his march from Delano to Sacramento. Because Filipino and Mexican farm workers united behind Chávez, he has great importance to Filipinos as well. And there were other demonstrations: John Silva notes the strike at Hanapepe in Hawaii, where 25 Filipinos were killed.

Places of achievement

How many visitors know that, in the early 20th century, White House cooks and stewards were Filipino? That represents an achievement in which John Silva takes pride. Guadalupe San Miguel wants to preserve and mark Ideal Records in Alice, Texas, which played an important role in Tejano music. Rolando Romo was moved to found the Tejano Association for Historical Preservation by the destruction of the house and grave of Lorenzo de Zavala, a pivotal figure in founding the Republic of Texas.¹⁵ Fred Cordova would like to see a directory showing where the "Filipino illustrious" are buried.

In recent decades, historians have emphasized the importance of documenting the lives of ordinary people. Many have sought to go beyond chronicling

FIGURE 1
Filipinos played an important role in the development of the California agricultural industry in the 20th century. They also helped to develop agricultural labor unions. In this ca. 1930s view in California's Central Valley, two laborers take a moment to pose for a photograph during the harvest season. (Courtesy of the Alvarado Project)



FIGURE 2

Participants at the 41st annual National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) meeting in Boston, MA, in June 1950 pose before the Union Methodist Church. The meeting represents the kinds of events that led to the civil rights movement. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Roger Wilkins Papers)



the contributions of individuals. Yet many preservation advocates continue to feel that it is important to celebrate the contributions and the achievements of both the famous and the unknown. Judith Baca says that making known the “contributions made to the United States by [Mexican Americans] would be a profound statement...a critically important acknowledgement of how much has been given to this country.” The website of the Tejano Association for Historical Preservation has a page listing 82 “Famous Tejanos & Tejanas in Texas History,”¹⁶ while the home page of the website, <http://www.filipinoamericans.net>, assures readers that “Filipino Americans quietly have made their indelible marks on America as politicians, doctors, judges, entrepreneurs, singers, professors, movie and television stars, etc.”

Places of interaction

“Communities are typically studied” in isolation, says Dorothy Fujita-Rony, “but it’s the interactions that produce some of the most interesting things in American culture.” The first Asian war brides in the United States, says Dorothy Cordova, founder of the Filipino American National Historical Society, were Filipino women who married African-American “Buffalo soldiers.” Respondents note marriages between Filipinos and Mexican Americans, Native Americans and Alaskans, and Mexicans and Native Americans. There were also shared cultures, life experience, and struggle. Black Americans fought alongside Filipinos in World War II. Filipinos united with Mexican farm workers behind César Chávez. Filipinos and Mexicans “have been pitted against each other” so often, laments Angel Shaw, but the reality was different. Their “complex and intertwining” cultural histories should be presented.

Many of the nation’s leading cities offer exceptional opportunities for interpreting interactions. Fujita-Rony nominates New York City as a naval center and Chicago as a railroad hub. In Seattle, Filipinos shared a neighborhood with African Americans. The markets and plazas of southwestern towns, suggests Refugio Rochin, offer opportunities to understand the blending of Hispanic and Native-American cultures.

Spiritual places

The importance of churches in African-American history and community life is often noted. For Mexican Americans, Refugio Rochin emphasizes cemeteries that, he notes, were as segregated as the barrios in which they lived. Olivia Cadaval adds that these cemeteries are “living spaces” in which the stories of people and families who are connected continue to be played out; in preserving them, one would be “preserving the living connection.”

Milestones of international relations

John Kuo Wei Tchen would like to mark Angel Island and the Presidio in San Francisco, California, launching points for the Spanish-American War and the subsequent Philippine-American War, as historic places. Judith Baca nominates the shifting borders between the United States and Mexico.

Places of education and presentation

Respondents identify two roles of historic places—to educate, and to present the group publicly, both to the group itself and to other Americans. All of the sites discussed above educate; some also present. Presentational sites need not commemorate specific events, but they should occupy prominent positions. Eric Gamalinda asks, “Why is there no José Rizal statue in the United States, outside Hawaii?” Describing Rizal as “one of the few unifying factors that our fractious people have,” Gamalinda proposes a statue in New York’s Central Park, where so many heroes of other nations are commemorated.

Icebergs: Hidden Dimensions of Historic Places

The value of historic places arises not only from their appearance, but also from the meanings attached to them, many of which are not visible. In this sense, historic places can resemble icebergs. While the word “association” is often used to denote ideas associated with artifacts but not directly visible in them, the meanings described by respondents go beyond what preservationists usually think of as associational significance.

Community, place, and culture

“Individual sites are important,” says architect Richard Dozier, but some of the most significant speak to issues outside of themselves. He recalls the founding of Brooklyn’s Weeksville Society in the 1970s. Had Joan Maynard merely wanted to preserve some houses that had survived from a 19th-century free black community, her task would have been relatively simple. What made it more difficult and has made the rewards greater, was her vision of how the houses could tell a broader story, and how that story could become valuable to Weeksville’s modern-day African-American community.

Some of Dozier's larger issues relate to the experience of community. Pervasive segregation, he explains, made the historically black colleges and universities anchors for neighborhoods where African Americans could find housing, business services, and nightlife. Later, as the barriers of segregation weakened, African Americans "found they could get their photocopying done downtown...they could even live across town." The tightly knit, campus-centered communities broke apart, leaving little trace on the cityscape. Today, campus buildings are not only important historic places in their own right but also valuable clues to a different way of life. Dozier challenges historic preservation to go beyond preserving buildings to conveying the buildings' social context—to presenting something "more representative of the history."

For Jeanne Cyriaque, maintaining historical awareness of community life is an important preservation goal. She lists a range of building types—churches, schools, meeting places, downtown business rows—that typically serve as "community landmarks." If these do not survive, "we have to capture the *spirit of place*"—meaning the consciousness that a vibrant community was once present at that spot. At Springfield Baptist Church in Augusta, Georgia, for example, a community group erected a 35-foot-high "Tower of Aspiration" to "signify the many people who lived in the community."

The problem of maintaining a "spirit of place" without built resources is pressing, because powerful forces of destruction have long been aimed at African-American neighborhoods: railroads, highways, mortgage redlining, abandonment, and urban renewal. John W. Franklin would like to organize an exhibition on "all of the African-American communities destroyed by highways...and other public works projects." The threats continue, and new forces of commercial development and gentrification have joined the older ones.

The most pervasive threats to resources associated with community life are directed at urban neighborhoods. These are generally located "at the center of the city," notes Cyriaque, "and now everyone wants to live there." True, white neighborhoods experience problems such as insensitive redevelopment, but while white activists typically describe the problem as a loss of amenity or architectural quality, Karl Webster Barnes, chairman of Georgia's African American Historic Preservation Network, frames it as a "removal of cultural memory."¹⁷

Mexican-American respondents also see historic places in a larger cultural context. They too face the challenge of preserving significant places without surviving buildings. Sometimes this arises because historical experiences took place in fields or factories, rather than monumental architecture. Elsewhere, a place's importance lies in people's knowledge of the *place* itself. Judith Baca refers to this as land-based memory, or "*la memoria de nuestra tierra*," the title she chose for a mural at Denver International Airport. Mexican Americans'

“depth of presence” in the land, she points out, is unrivalled except by Native Americans, and “people believe that memory resides in the land.” Indeed the longevity of Mexican communities has meant not only a strong southwestern culture but distinctive local cultures as well—traditions, stories, music, and ways of making a living as disparate as farming, ranching, or cutting railroad ties. Throughout the area, she says, there are “amazing stories of regional land memory.” (Figure 3)

FIGURE 3

Places like the Trujillo Homestead juxtapose ethnic heritage and the development of the American West. A first generation Mexican American, Pedro Trujillo owned and operated this ranch in Alamosa County, CO from 1879 to 1902. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the ranch house, pictured here, is significant for its association with the period of contention between family owned Hispanic ranches and larger European-American ranches over land, resources, and control of the San Luis Valley. (Courtesy of Thomas H. Simmons, Nature Conservancy)



Land memory has practical dimensions too. By and large, the United States failed to honor its treaty promises to respect Spanish land grants and much land left Spanish ownership—over a century and a half after the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, says Judith Baca, “People live with this every day.” Olivia Cadaval remarks that in parts of the southwest, heritage issues revolve not around cultural identity but around land grants. Baca, Cadaval, and Rosaura Sanchez all agree that the grants should be marked. That would, at least, help to maintain the memory of deep presence in the land.

Like other respondents, Luis Francia wants “visible artifacts” to be “tied into the larger representation of Filipino heritage and culture.” As “representations of actual people and events,” Angel Shaw similarly urges that places have plaques or other information tools to build out the story. Beyond plaques, representation for Francia means preserving collections, documents, and oral histories. For John Kuo Wei Tchen, it means public education, the first step in the “real redress” of deeply divisive social problems.

Teaching with historic places

Many respondents want historic places to teach, to teach better history and more of it. Where minority groups are concerned, however, the struggle for a

full and fair interpretation can be exhausting. Two decades ago, as part of an important study carried out for the state of California, Antonia Castañeda identified a number of important Mexican-American historic sites and proposed improvements in the state's official site markers.¹⁸ Yet her impression is that little has changed.

An archeologist once predicted that the richest sites for unearthing new masterpieces of ancient Urartu culture would not be the mountains of eastern Turkey but the basements of museums, where heaps of objects awaited proper identification. In the same way, many existing historic places await proper identification. When Nicolás Kanellos notes that Spanish drama was presented at the Merced Theater in Los Angeles during the 1850s, he identifies the Merced as a Mexican-American site; tour guides can now present it as such. When John Silva points out that early Filipino sailors left statues or tabernacles at some California missions, he identifies them as Filipino sites; curators can now interpret the Filipino presence. But the missions present bigger challenges. While many of them are preserved and celebrated, notes Rosaura Sanchez, they are “mostly for tourists” and present a “quaint” view of the past.

One of the quickest ways to create “new” African-American, Mexican, and Filipino places is to interpret these groups' roles at existing sites. Filipino presence at the White House has already been mentioned. The National Park Service plans to revise its interpretation of Philadelphia's Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell to acknowledge slave quarters on the site. How much richer the story would be if it also included the Latin American revolutionary leaders and intellectuals who flocked to Philadelphia during the 19th century, inspired by the city's contribution to the cause of liberty. The story of Faneuil Hall, one of Boston's most popular tourist attractions, could be similarly enriched by including demonstrations against the Spanish-American War that took place there. If these three icons of American history can readily divulge such unexpected and important stories, how many other stories are awaiting rediscovery in historic places across the country?

Beyond telling a good story, says Nicolás Kanellos, “You have to have something for people to see” at historic sites. The best history museums are sophisticated at presenting complex stories, and historic sites can enrich their interpretation by presenting artifacts and documents more engagingly. Bookshops, too, allow site managers to put knowledge into the hands of visitors. Yet Kanellos reports that in museum and historic site bookshops across the country, “Hispanic presence is nil.”

Marketing historic places

A site lives through public awareness, but respondents pointed out that awareness of sites and collections is often low. John Silva believes that historical organizations and agencies could dramatically expand their constituency by

getting the word out. In fact, the National Park Service has made a substantial effort to market its programs to African-American audiences. Virgilio Pilapil urges the National Park Service to publish a list and map of historic sites with particular relevance to Filipino Americans. There are also opportunities for many other federal and state agencies, as well as authors and publishers, for printed and Internet guidebooks, itineraries, and trails that direct travellers to African-American, Hispanic, and Filipino historic places. Substantial gains can be made by disseminating information about existing resources.

The Work Ahead: A Proposal

The question is “what next?” The answer should reflect the dynamics of the information-gathering process itself. “There is a lot of frustration out here,” comments Richard Dozier. Many respondents are tired of being asked their opinion.

Disillusionment with well-intentioned fact-finding is widespread: there is skepticism about whether it will lead to action. While respondents are eager to work with the National Park Service, Gerald Poyo warns that the bureau could “do more damage than good” if it fails to follow talk with action. Poyo has a suggestion: before asking more questions, put some money on the table. Launch an initiative; then convene experts and community leaders. Very simply, respondents are saying: enough talk—now we want action.

The Federal Government, led by the National Park Service, should undertake an initiative to identify, protect, and interpret places of essential importance to the nation’s diverse history. The bureau should also quickly assemble a team of experts outside of government, including historians and community leaders. No mere review committee, this group should work directly with the Federal Government in shaping and carrying out the project.

To provide a thematic focus, the Federal Government and its steering committee of volunteer advisors should consider organizing the initiative around places that reflect the interactions among (and within) ethnic or racial groups in American history. Many respondents expressed particular interest in this theme, which would have wide relevance as well as public appeal.

Although the National Register of Historic Places is a logical vehicle for such an initiative, the National Register is not under most circumstances authorized to nominate places. That is the prerogative of the states and other nominating authorities. The National Park Service could, however, provide technical assistance and encouragement, for example, by publishing National Register bulletins on identifying and evaluating places associated with African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Filipino Americans, and by offering workshops in collaboration with citizen groups.

Unfortunately, official designation standards make it difficult to recognize many crucially important sites. Most troublesome is the integrity standard, which requires that listed sites survive substantially unaltered from their “period of significance.” The challenge is that many important historical experiences did not take place in buildings that have survived intact. They took place in open fields, barrios, labor camps, union halls, social clubs, street-front churches, bunkhouses, tenements, cabins, factories, and docks. Where such resources have survived, respondents want to preserve them. But where they have not, many respondents report a strong sense of connection to the places where people had lived and struggled. Jeanne Cyriaque’s “spirit of place” typifies the sense expressed by many respondents that these places are hallowed by the presence of their predecessors. National Register standards that emphasize integrity of historic properties make it more difficult to honor this consciousness of place and history. Such standards also saddle preservation efforts with an unintended bias against working-class and immigrant history. These biases should be corrected: The National Register should be fully capable of recognizing the values of places and the historical connection that people feel towards them.¹⁹

As important as the National Register and other inventories of historic places are, there is much more that the Federal Government can do as part of this initiative to realize the educational value of historic places. The National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities, the Library of Congress, and Smithsonian Institution have done important work in documenting and preserving the history of diverse communities. They have much to contribute to this initiative, as do the Institute for Museum and Library Services, State Historic Preservation Offices, and state and regional arts and humanities councils. These agencies have or can create archives or databases of historical and ethnographic materials related to the sites; fund curricular materials, publications, websites, public art, or markers to increase public understanding of the sites and stories; and assist in cataloguing and conserving priceless archival and museum collections. In addition to listing places, the National Park Service itself can update exhibits, interpretation, and bookstore offerings at national parks. Whatever its precise components, the initiative should combine deep respect for the spirit of place, a rigorous commitment to history, and a passion for teaching. It should identify the places *and* tell the stories; promote bricks *and* books; preserve *and* interpret; inspire *and* educate.

The proposed initiative could culminate with the publication of “how-to” guides that citizens’ groups throughout the country will be able to use for years to come. These handbooks can be modeled on the excellent guides that already exist for identifying African-American historic places, but they should also include guidelines for plaques, public art, guidebooks, curricular materials, and local preservation campaigns.

Challenges Ahead

This initiative will not, by itself, close the diversity deficit. It is a down payment. The deficit will be closed when we have a preservation system that incorporates diversity into its basic structure. Only by diversifying the profession itself, through staff jobs, contract work, and partnerships, will the discipline's resources be fully mobilized to address the heritage of minority communities. Only then will the expertise of minority communities become fully available to the preservation profession.

This work should be accelerated, but it will take time to accomplish. Meanwhile, an ambitious historic places initiative can build working relationships, marshal resources, and create institutional capacity. Most importantly, such an initiative can create a public history of the national past that reflects its true diversity. Preservationists should be satisfied with no less. Nor should the American public.

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Notes

1. Copies of the draft Cultural Heritage Needs Assessment Report can be obtained from the Diversity and Special Projects office, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW (2251), Washington, DC 20240, and online at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/crdi>, select "research."
2. Carole Merritt, *Historic Black Resources: A Handbook for the Identification, Documentation, and Evaluation of Historic African-American Properties in Georgia* (Atlanta, GA: Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1984).
3. For museums' responses to African-American issues, see James Oliver Horton and Spencer R. Crew, "Afro-Americans and Museums: Towards a Policy of Inclusion" in *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, ed. Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989).
4. *National Park Service Management Policies 2001*, Sec. 7.5.5. Quoted from Emogene Bevitt (comp.), "National Park Service Policies Regarding Native Americans, Park-Associated Communities, Public Participation, and Community Relations" (January 2003).
5. The Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places provided the number of total properties listed in the National Register and the number of properties associated with African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans as of April 20, 2004. The Keeper also stated, "Most properties are not listed by virtue of their association with a particular ethnic group—only 3,000 of the over 77,000 listings include reference to one of the seven groups for which statistics are maintained." The groups include Asian, Black, European, Hispanic, Native American, Other, and Pacific Islander. In addition, "The National Historic Preservation Act compliance process is a major driver for identifying properties and yet does not necessarily result in listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Thousands of properties are listed on state inventories and hidden away in the grey literature of National Historic Preservation Act compliance documentation that are associated with various ethnic groups."
6. National Park Service, "Cultural Heritage Needs Assessment Project: Phase I," project statement, 2002. The assessment was sponsored by the National Park Service's National Center for Cultural Resources, with advice from the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and the Library of Congress's American Folklife Center. While focusing on

historic preservation, its findings touch on park and historic site management, museum collection and curation, folklore, ethnography, and the operation of bookshops. The findings will be relevant to federal agency staff, State Historic Preservation Offices, local preservation nonprofit organizations, museums, park agencies, and researchers.

7. *Keepers of the Treasures: Protecting Historic Properties and Cultural Traditions on Indian Lands*, A Report on Tribal Preservation Funding Needs Submitted to Congress by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior (National Park Service, 1990).

8. Miguel Vasquez, "Latinos—Viva La Diferencia!," *CRM* 24, no. 5 (2001): 22.

9. In the remainder of the article, sources for statements without footnotes are respondents to the study, who were interviewed in person or by telephone between July 2003 and March 2004. Wherever statements refer to a specific ethnic or racial group, respondents are members of that group, unless otherwise noted.

10. David Hornbeck, "Spanish Legacy in the Borderlands," in *The Making of the American Landscape*, ed. Michael P. Conzen, (New York and London, Routledge, 1994), 51-62.

11. "Poetry and the Burden of History: An Interview with Martin Espada," published on the website of the University of Illinois's Department of English at http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/a_f/espada/interview.htm. I am grateful to my daughter Emily Kaufman for this reference.

12. See Eric Yamamoto, *Interracial Justice: Conflict and Reconciliation in Post-Civil-Rights America* (New York: New York University Press, 1999). Yamamoto outlines four steps to reconciliation: recognition, responsibility, reconstruction, and reparation.

13. Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1952; New York: Vintage International, 1999), 3.

14. James Oliver Horton, "On-Site Learning: The Power of Historic Places," *CRM* 23, no. 8 (2000): 4.

15. Rolando M. Romo, "The Founding of the Tejano Association for Historical Preservation," unpublished paper.

16. The Tejano Association for Historical Preservation, Lorenzo de Zavala Chapter, <http://www.tejanoahp.org>.

17. Karl Webster Barnes, "Your Vision, Your Memory, Your Challenge: Preservation is Good for Your African American Neighborhood Revitalization," Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division, *Reflections* 2, no. 4 (September 2002): 6.

18. See *Five Views: An Ethnic Sites Survey for California* (Sacramento, CA: State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, 1988).

19. For a sampling of some of the building types associated with outsider ethnic groups, see *Five Views*. For a discussion of the integrity criterion, particularly as it relates to industrial buildings, see Ned Kaufman, *History Happened Here: A Plan for Saving New York City's Historically and Culturally Significant Sites* (New York: Municipal Art Society, 1996), pp. 48 ff. For traditional cultural places, see Patricia F. Parker and Thomas F. King, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register Bulletin 38. For a discussion of traditional cultural properties within the general context of preserving sites associated with tradition, see Ned Kaufman, "Places of Historical, Cultural, and Social Value: Identification and Protection," *Environmental Law in New York* 12, no. 11 (2001): 211-12 and 224-33, and 12, no. 12 (2001): 235 and 248-256.